

SR-12, Escalante to Boulder Project Phase II Underway

Phase I of the SR-12, Escalante to Boulder Environmental Study is complete and Phase II has begun with a new approach to improving safety and maintenance operations along the SR-12 corridor. Currently there is not adequate right-of-way for the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) crews to perform appropriate maintenance activities from Head-of-the-Rocks to the forest service boundary. The project team and UDOT have met with the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to discuss the best approach to resolve this issue.

The strategies available to obtain right-of-way within the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument are limited. The Monument Proclamation does not allow for appropriation of land within the monument. It will be necessary to pursue a right-of-way grant. A right-of-way grant is an authorization to use a specific piece of public land for specific use. As part of this next phase of the SR-12 project, UDOT and the project team will seek a Title V right-of-way grant from the BLM.

This process involves submitting a right-of-way grant application and an accompanying plan of development to the BLM. The plan of development is a document that will outline and describe the proposed actions/spot improvements along the corridor. Following the grant application process, a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document will be prepared. Because Title V is a grant, not a transfer of land, BLM will remain the steward of the land.

Prior to Phase II, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was the lead agency for this project. Due to the Monument Proclamation and the need to pursue a Title V right-of-way land grant, BLM will act as lead agency for this phase of the project, which entails submitting the right-of-way grant application and the plan of development. As recommended by BLM, the project team will submit the right-of-way grant application and plan of development for review prior to preparing a NEPA document.

Due to limitations on available funding, the proposed actions that will be included in the plan of development and the subsequent NEPA document will be prioritized based on need. At this time the plan of development and the NEPA document will address right-of-way and potential improvements that could possibly be funded within the next five to ten years. Any additional improvements will be environmentally cleared in a separate NEPA document.

This next phase of the project, which includes the right-of-way grant application and plan of development, will span approximately six to eight months. After that time, public comment on the proposed actions outlined in the plan of development will be sought and a NEPA document will begin.

Your input on this project is very valuable. The project team welcomes any questions, comments, or suggestions that you may have. Information regarding this project can be found on the project web site at www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12. You can also contact the project team at the phone number or email listed below.

For more information regarding the
SR-12 Environmental Assessment, please visit:

www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12

Or contact the public involvement team at:

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